

Palomar Mountain's Morgan Hill and *Laqalqa*

Peter Brueggeman, 2025



Eleanor Beemer wrote *My Luiseno Neighbors, Excerpts from a Journal Kept in Pauma Valley Northern San Diego County, 1934 to 1974* [Ramona, California: Acoma Books, 1980] about her interactions with the Luiseno people. Beemer thoroughly references the work of John P. Harrington, who wrote on their linguistics and ethnography. Beemer presents personal and detailed observations on Luiseno folklore, places, objects and rituals, attitudes towards death and their memorial services, and many other interesting facets.

One interesting Luiseno place Beemer discusses is *Laqalqa* in the Morgan Hill area of Palomar Mountain. *Laqalqa* is the exposed rock face seen in the above photo, which she says is about five miles beyond upper French Valley, and overlooking Frey and Aqua Tibia canyons.

Laqalqa is spelled phonetically in this way by Beemer who listened to the word's pronunciation; it means something that has been smeared over. Young Luisenos would come to *Laqalqa* for a test of manhood and bravery, by trail from Pauma with a companion, carrying a rope for which the young male had gathered local materials and made himself. One proof of his manhood and bravery would be to be lowered by that self-made rope down the face of *Laqalqa* by the companion and then pull himself back up.



Informant Martin Ardilla, center. Cleto Forbes, right. Men stand atop *Laqalqa* looking west across the valley of San Luis Rey River between Pauma and Pala valleys. 1930s.



Luiseno acorn gathering place near 4500' elevation. *Laqalqa*. Martin Ardilla on right. Note portable mortar, foreground, and potrest stones. 1930s.